

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
EXTENSION SERVICE
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* OUTLINE OF PLAN TO FACILITATE THE MOVEMENT
OF
MIGRANTS ESSENTIAL TO FARM PRODUCTION IN WESTERN STATES

With the growth of the production of specialized crops with high peak labor requirements, many areas in the Western States have needed more workers for relatively short periods than could be supplied from local sources. Over a period of years, previous to World War II, these workers have come from a variety of sources. During World War II, with the permanent employment opportunities available not only in the Western States but elsewhere in the country, the number of domestic migrant farm workers in the West dropped far below the prewar supply. This occurred despite increases in acreage and very large increases in wage rates. Foreign workers, principally from Mexico, and prisoners of war were very important sources of supplemental labor from 1943 to 1946. With the close of actual fighting domestic labor supplies began to improve, and in 1946 the numbers of domestic migratory farm workers in the Western States was considerably larger than the numbers in 1943, 1944, and 1945. A rather large part of these people were migrants for the first time. They appreciated accurate information regarding need for workers, employment conditions, and housing that they would find in areas to which they might go. Most of these migrants moved in small family groups without advance employment arrangements. Farmers needing workers seldom had advance notice of the supply they could expect.

GENERAL POLICY

Under the Emergency Farm Labor Program, beginning in 1943, the Cooperative Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State agricultural colleges are responsible for the domestic labor phases of the program "to assist in providing an adequate supply of agricultural commodities essential to the orderly transition from war to peace." In performing this function, the Extension Service is desirous of facilitating the movement of such workers as are needed for agricultural production. It aims to supplement, not to displace, the efforts of agricultural producers to recruit workers and of agricultural workers to find employment. Both employers and workers will be encouraged to use their own initiative in making employment arrangements and in solving employment problems. Employment relationships which have proved satisfactory should be maintained.

The objective of the Extension Service is to encourage the desirable movement and utilization of workers by collecting and distributing pertinent information. Assistance to employers of migratory workers will include the distribution of information to them regarding supply and movement of labor and other pertinent information about potential areas of recruitment and the type of living and working conditions that migrants desire. Assistance to migrants will include the distribution of information to them in regard to the current and future employment conditions and opportunities in the Western areas.

PROCEDURE

The steps to be followed in 1947 in facilitating the movement of migratory workers in the Western States are listed below:

In using the terms "State of need" and "State of supply," it must be recognized that each State using migratory workers is a "State of need" previous to and during the period when workers are employed in the State. Each State is also a "State of supply" previous to and at the time when migrant workers have completed their work in the State and are available for agricultural employment in other States.

1. The State extension services in States of need will determine the number of migratory workers needed in agriculture, in addition to workers available locally. They will make such determination for local areas and transmit regularly to the Federal Extension office at Berkeley current information for such areas, regarding: Jobs to be done and crop conditions, number of migratory workers needed, period of employment, wages offered, housing available, and other related matters which may be helpful in directing workers to local areas of employment. They will urge employers of migratory workers in each area to pool their needs and cooperate in the recruitment and utilization of the supply of workers available.

2. The State extension services in each State of supply will determine the time when migratory workers in the State will be completing their work and the approximate numbers that will be available for employment in other States. It will transmit regularly to the Federal Extension office at Berkeley information regarding: Crop conditions and progress of the operation, estimated numbers of migratory workers employed, dates when they will be available for future employment, and reports on the work plans of migrants that have been interviewed.

3. The State extension services, will maintain information stations at strategic highway points. Their purpose is to collect helpful information regarding the movement and to assist migratory workers en route. Personnel at these stations will distribute information regarding employment opportunities in areas of need, and record and report the movement of workers. Such reports will be furnished daily to the Federal Extension office at Berkeley.

4. The Federal Extension office at Berkeley will assemble and correlate pertinent information regarding employment situations, availability of workers, and progress of the movements. Timely information will be transmitted promptly to the States and information stations.

5. Extension services of States of supply and the information stations will distribute to migratory workers information regarding current and future employment opportunities in succeeding areas of employment.

6. The extension services in the States of need will provide employers with information regarding the seasonal movement of migrants.

7. When the Federal Extension Service determines that additional information regarding employment opportunities is needed by workers, or that additional information regarding the supply of workers is needed by employers, representative of extension services in States of need may visit areas of supply, when such visits are mutually agreed upon by the States involved. When employers wish to visit potential recruitment areas, they will be urged to make contact with the Extension Service of such States to obtain further information before engaging in recruitment activity.

8. The extension services in the States of need will urge employers of migratory workers to provide housing, sanitary facilities, and living conditions which will conform to the laws of the State and which will be attractive to migratory workers. To make employment in the area more attractive for migratory workers, employers will be encouraged to develop child care facilities, recreational opportunities, and community acceptance for the workers. The extension services in the States of need will develop an educational program to promote satisfactory employer-employee relationships, and encourage employers to provide patterns of employment for workers that will enable them to have a sequence of job opportunities.

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